RE the BDCP: solutions and analyses
From NAS session on sustainable water and environmental management, San Francisco 12/8/2010
Panel of speakers (DWR, USBR, Met, Westland's, TNC, American Rivers, NOAA, DFG, FWS)

Several panelists (Pettier, Patterson) referred to an impasse around inability to warrant enough water supply (reliability) to fund the solution (a PC, or tunnel, and other BDCP components). They seem to think, or want to bend the science to demonstrate, that a solution with 'lots of water' for users is compatible with ecosystem success (of some sort)—a premise not accepted by the enviros and possibly counter to science if it's pointed in the direction of bringing back native pelagic species.

Every speaker seemed to limit the scope of solution to the BDCP per se-- basically to the goal of obtaining ESA coverage and State Board project permits. The State Board's role would thus be that of accepting a solution worked out thru BDCP. However, SB action following the BDCP need not match in scope and substance the BDCP decisions/actors: The SB could be considering measures that extend upstream, and down into the Bay. Other parties may also need to be brought in: e.g., for a given level of water use, greater recycling and reuse within the urban service area of SF and EBMUD could replace diversions made well upstream of the Delta.

In other words, the Delta-focused/project-bound stratagems and assumptions repeated at the workshop appear too limited to warrant success for the ecosystem. A solution may require a system-wide perspective that broadens responsibilities to provide water (and possibly other resources) for the Delta. This perspective would:

- Expand the "Delta water base" available for water supply reliability and ecosystem goals by…
- Providing more flows from upstream to (a) contribute to the instream conditions needed for river habitat and water quality for certain target BDCP species and (b) augment the "base" for inflow, Delta hydrodynamics and outflow. I.e., …
- Equitably expect that upstream diverters contribute to a Delta solution.

It's unclear whether the BDCP is working with the SB and others to characterize these conditions. These conditions would be the result of implementing SB (and other?) decisions that support but are not be part of the BDCP. They are not 'effects' of the proposed BDCP but would be part of a plausible future context in which the BDCP is implemented.

The CEQA/NEPA analysis for the BDCP could anticipate SB (and other?) actions by providing alternative future conditions resulting from theses actions. Mainly this relates to how much, and where, water is diverted within the watershed; and to how 'efficiently' this diverted water is used. (It would be a different way of looking at the familiar 'level of development' used in modeling.)

Here are some questions for the folks working on the BDCP:
1. What future baseline (NEPA No Action) is being used for upstream diversions, and for inflow to the Delta? Is thought being given to multiple scenarios—e.g., using 20% by 2020 conservation, or SJ flow scenarios. Is there calculation of the conservation/recycling potential of upstream diverters?
2. Is the State Board advising BDCP regarding information/conditions needed to support SB action post BDCP; what is the geographic and 'user' scope (if SB is advising). Does the SB scope of action represented in the BDCP coincide with the BDCP, or is it broader? Is there any recognition of recent SB flows docs?
3. Can inflow, internal Delta hydrodynamics and outflow needs for the ecosystem be defined in such a way that there potential for warranting water supply reliability?